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## WA-BA-BA-NAL, OR NORTHERN LIGHTS.

## A WABANAKI LEGEND.

OLD Chief M'Sartto (Morning Star) had an only son, so different from the other boys of the tribe as to be worry to old chief. He would not stay and play with the others, but would take his bow and arrows, and leave home for days at a time, always going towards the north. When he came home they would say, "Where you been — what you see?" but he say nothing. At last old chief say his wife, "The boy must be watched. I will follow him." So next time M'Sartto kept in his path and travall for long time. Suddenly his eyes closed an' he could not hear; he had a curious feeling, then *know* nothing. By'm-by his eyes open in a queer light country, no sun, no moon, no stars, but country all lighted by this peculiar light. He saw many beings, but all different from his people. They gather 'round and try to talk, but he not understand their language. M'Sartto did not know where to go nor what to do. He well treated by this strange tribe; he watched their games and was 'tracted to wonderful game of ball he never saw before; it seemed to turn the light to many colors, and the players all had lights on their heads, and all wore very curious kind belts, called *Menquan*, or Rainbow belts. In few days an old man came and speak to M'Sartto in his own language, and ask him if he knew where he was. Old chief say "No." Then old man say, "You are in the country of Wa-ba-ban (northern lights). I came here many years ago. I was the only one here from the 'lower country,' as we call it; but now there is a boy comes to visit us every few days." Then M'Sartto ask how old man got there — what way he come. Old man say, "I follow path called Spirits' Path, *Ket-à-gus-wowwt* (Milky-Way)." "This must be same path I come," said old chief. "Did you have queer feeling as if you lost all knowledge when you traveled?" "Yes," say old man, "I could not see nor hear." Then say M'Sartto, "We did come by same path. Can you tell me how I can get home again?" "Yes, the chief of Wa-ba-ban will send you home safe." "Well, can you tell me where I can see my boy? — the boy that comes here to visit you is mine." Then old man tell M'Sartto, "You will see him playing ball if you watch." Chief M'Sartto very glad to hear this, and when man went 'round to wigwams telling all to go have game ball, M'Sartto go too. When game began he saw many beautiful colors in the playground. Old man ask him, "Do you see your boy there?" Old chief said he did: "The one with the brightest light on his head is my son." Then they went to Chief of Northern Lights, and the

old man said, "The chief of the Lower Country wants to go home, and also wants his boy." So Chief of Northern Lights calls his people together to bid good-by to M'Sartto and his son, then ordered two *K'che Sipp's* (great birds) to carry them home. When they were traveling the Milky-Way he felt the same strange way he did when going, and when he came to his senses he found himself near home. His wife very glad he come, for when boy told him his father was safe she pay no notice, as she afraid M'Sartto was lost.

#### THE LEGEND OF INDIAN CORN.

A long time ago, when Indians were first made, there lived one alone, far, far from any others. He knew not of fire, and subsisted on roots, barks, and nuts. This Indian became very lonesome for company. He grew tired of digging roots, lost his appetite, and for several days lay dreaming in the sunshine; when he awoke he saw something standing near, at which, at first, he was very much frightened. But when it spoke, his heart was glad, for it was a beautiful woman with long *light* hair, very unlike any Indian. He asked her to come to him, but she would not, and if he tried to approach her she seemed to go farther away; he sang to her of his loneliness and besought her not to leave him; at last she told him, if he would do just as she should say, he would always have her with him. He promised that he would. She led him to where there was some very dry grass, told him to get two very dry sticks, rub them together quickly, holding them in the grass. Soon a spark flew out; the grass caught it, and quick as an arrow the ground was burned over. Then she said, "When the sun sets, take me by the hair and drag me over the burned ground." He did not like to do this, but she told him that wherever he dragged her something like grass would spring up, and he would see her hair coming from between the leaves; then the seeds would be ready for his use. He did as she said, and to this day, when they see the silk (hair) on the cornstalk, the Indians know she has not forgotten them.

The folk-tales among the Wa-ban-aki must have been innumerable, for, though these tales are so swiftly dying out, there seem to be few things in nature for which they have no legend as to its life or beginning. The story of *Wa-ba-ban* — which I give literally as told me — was called forth by my asking, "How do you think the Indians learned to play ball?" And I find these mythical ball-players figure in many of their legends.

*Mrs. W. Wallace Brown.*